

REMARKS

The non-final Office Action of 14 February 2008 has been carefully considered. Claims 1-26 are pending, and they all stand rejected. The rejected independent claims are method claim 1, device claim 18, and system claim 23. All of the rejected claims stand rejected as obvious from *Dean* (U.S. Patent No. 6,167,379) in view of *Barto* (U.S. Patent No. 7,069,097).

All of the present claim amendments are fully supported by the specification as originally filed, and no new matter is introduced. New independent claim 27 is a means-plus-function claim corresponding to existing non-mean-plus-function claim 18.

Objections to Drawings

A corrected FIG. 1 is enclosed, with an arrow on the line going from box 115 to box 105, and also with the "No" in box 120 removed. A version of FIG. 1 marked up in red ink is also enclosed for the convenience of the Examiner.

Regarding FIG. 1(a), it is objected to under 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) which says that "Reference characters not mentioned in the description shall not appear in the drawings." Applicant now removes FIG. 1(a) as suggested by the Examiner. This figure was included inadvertently, and is not among the figures listed at page 4, lines 14-24 of the application.

Objections to Abstract

The abstract is objected too as being too long. Therefore, the Abstract is now amended to be less than 150 words.

Objection to Claim 17

Claim 17 is objected to for attempting to convert a method claim to an apparatus claim. Dependent claim 17 is now placed in independent form.

Indefiniteness Rejections

Claims 1-17 and 23-26 are rejected for indefiniteness, under 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Regarding claims 1 and 2, claim 2 is now cancelled. Claim 1 is now amended to clarify that an electronic schedule apparatus is performing the method.

Regarding claim 15, it is now clarified by adding a limitation: “a further reservation effectively causes a contraction of the booking interval, if the further reservation has additional requirements about when the booking will occur”. This is supported at least by the first full paragraph on page 6 of the application as originally filed.

Regarding claim 17, as mentioned above, it is now put in independent form.

Regarding claim 23, the word “a” is now changed to “the” as recommended in the non-final Office Action.

Patentable Utility Rejections

Method claims 1-16 are rejected as lacking patentable utility, under 35 U.S.C. § 101. Applicant respectfully submits that the amendments of present independent claim 1 (from which claims 2-15 depend) take care of this problem. For example, present claim 1 now claims “rejecting the booking in case of a scheduling conflict between the booking and the personal time” which is a tangible, concrete, and useful result. This helps the user avoid excessive impositions on his personal time, and helps an inquiry party to learn if his booking is okay or not.

Obviousness Rejections

Claims 1-26 are rejected as obvious from *Dean* (U.S. Patent No. 6,167,379) in view of *Barto* (U.S. Patent No. 7,069,097), under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Dean involves a situation where a single person has two versions of a single calendar. For example, the single person could be a salesperson who maintains a calendar in a portable electronic organizer while in the field, but also maintains the calendar on a desktop computer at his sales office (see column 1, lines 23-29). When there is an update to one of the salesperson’s

two calendar versions, the other calendar of the salesperson is checked in order to discover whether the update would cause a conflict between the user's two calendar versions (see column 2, lines 6-15).

The non-final Office Action refers to column 2, lines 16-19 of *Dean*, for the idea of recording an amount of personal time. However, those lines of *Dean* do not involve recording an amount of personal time. Applicant respectfully submits that those lines of *Dean* merely disclose updating a user's calendar to schedule an event, and then notifying a copy of the user's calendar that it should also be updated. There is nothing in *Dean* about recording personal time during which no events can be booked, as claimed in the present amended claim 1.

The *Barto* reference does not make up for this deficiency of the *Dean* reference. Moreover, the *Barto* reference does not disclose other features of present amended claim 1 described in the non-final Office Action. For example, the non-final Office Action states that column 9, lines 25-37 of *Barto* discloses storing an interval during which personal time is reserved, the "kernel" of *Barto* being the personal time, and the "working window" of *Barto* being the interval. However, Applicant respectfully submits that the "kernel" of *Barto* is the opposite of the present claimed personal time, because the kernel of *Barto* is a time period during which a provider actually completes a task for the consumer; this "kernel" is the exact opposite of a time period during which the consumer does not want a booking with the provider (as presently claimed in amended claim 1).

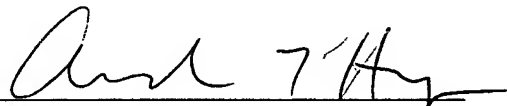
CONCLUSION

Because the cited references do not teach or suggest critical elements of the present amended independent claims, it is respectfully submitted that the present claims are novel and patentable. Early allowance of the pending claims is therefore earnestly solicited. Applicant would be grateful if the Examiner would please contact Applicant's attorney by telephone if the Examiner detects anything in the present response that might hinder a speedy allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: 8 Aug 2008

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